

Film Explores Debate Over Origins of Life

The makers of *Expelled: No Intelligence Allowed* say scientists who question Darwin's view are persecuted

The debate over intelligent design will hit the big screen this month when *Expelled: No Intelligence Allowed* opens in theaters.

Starring comedian, economist and author Ben Stein, the documentary explores what filmmakers say is discrimination within the academic community against educators and scientists who question evolutionary theories on the origins of life. The film cites several examples.

At George Mason University, biology professor Caroline Crocker said she was forced out for briefly discussing problems with Darwinian theory in her class and for telling students that some scientists believe there is evidence of intelligent design in the cosmos. Astronomer Guillermo Gonzalez was denied tenure at Iowa State University for his affiliation with the intelligent design movement.

"Scientists are supposed to be allowed to follow the evidence wherever it may lead, no matter what the implications are," Stein said in a news release. "Freedom of inquiry has been greatly compromised, and this is not only anti-American, it's anti-science. It's anti- the whole concept of learning."

Produced by Premise Media, the documentary was culled from interviews with more than 150 scientists including both intelligent design supporters such as renowned microbiologist

David Berlinski and William Dembski, author of *Design of Life*, as well as evolution advocates such as biologist Richard Dawkins, author of *The God Delusion*, and Eugenie Scott, head of the National Center for Science Education.

Last fall, Dawkins and other scientists interviewed for *Expelled*, including biologist PZ Myers, claimed they were misled about the purpose of the documentary. The film was originally titled *Crossroads: The Intersection of Science and Religion*, which interviewees were told would examine “the disconnect/controversy that exists in America between Evolution, Creationism and the Intelligent Design movement,” according to a letter Myers posted online.

“At no time was I given the slightest clue that these people were a creationist front,” Dawkins told *The Guardian* newspaper.

However, Premise Media co-founder Logan Craft said his company never misrepresented its intentions. “When they heard that it wasn’t necessarily pro-Darwinian, that’s when they decided to make these attacks,” he said. “They all signed releases. They were all paid for their interviews. I think those charges were vacuous.”

Expelled has been shown to Christian leaders nationwide in hopes of creating grass-roots support for the documentary. Churches are being encouraged to buy out local theaters when the film opens and use resources posted at to further the debate about intelligent design.

“*Expelled* is a must-see film,” said *LIFE Today* host James Robison. “Any thoughtful Christian will appreciate the

questions asked by the film and find inspiration in the answers that point to the truth.”

But more than advocating for intelligent design, Premise Media CEO Walt Ruloff said he hopes the film will promote greater academic freedom for scientists. In cooperation with the Discovery Institute, an intelligent design think tank, Premise developed a petition posted at supporting scientists’ right to research alternative scientific theories.

“We really are not validating one particular position,” Ruloff said. “What we’re really asking for is freedom of speech, and allowing science and students ... to have the freedom to go where they need to go and ask the questions.”

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